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THE GNOSTIC JESUS
AND
EARLY CHRISTIAN POLITICS

The University Lecture in Religion
at
Arizona State University

by
Elaine Pagels
Professor of Religion
Barnard College

January 28, 1982



Department of Religious Studies
Arizona State University
Tempe, Arizona

THE LECTURER

Elaine Hiesey Pagels was born in Palo Alto, California. After receiving a B.A. with honors in 1964 and an M.A. in Classics in 1965, both from Stanford University, she entered the doctoral program in religion at Harvard University. During that program of study she received a Harvard University Fellowship, a Kent Fellowship for study at Oxford University, and a Rockefeller Fellowship. She completed the Ph.D. with distinction in 1970 and since that time has taught in the Department of Religious Studies at Barnard College.

Professor Pagels has published numerous articles and essays and has been involved in the preparation and publication of several Nag Hammadi treatises as a member of the International Committee for the Nag Hammadi Codices. She has also written *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis*, and *Paul the Gnostic: Gnostic Exegesis of the Pauline Letters*. Her 1979 publication, *The Gnostic Gospels*, won the National Book Critics Circle Award and the American Book Award.

Post-doctoral research by Professor Pagels has been supported by numerous grants and awards. She received a Fellowship for Young Humanists from the National Foundation for the Humanities, a Rockefeller Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, grants from the American Philosophical Society and the American Council of Learned Societies, and was twice a Hazen Fellow as well as a Mellon Fellow for Humanistic Studies. Recently she was awarded the MacArthur Prize Fellowship for 1981-1986.

With her husband, Heinz R. Pagels, Professor of Theoretical Physics at Rockefeller University, and their son, Mark William, Professor Pagels lives in New York City.

THE LECTURE

The University Lecture in Religion at Arizona State University presents an original scholarly study in the field of religion to the general academic community. The 1979-80 lecture inaugurating this series was given by Professor Jacob Neusner of Brown University. Professor Giles Gunn, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, gave the University Lecture for 1980-81.

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SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
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THE Gnostic JESUS AND EARLY CHRISTIAN POLITICS

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An extraordinary archaeological discovery is currently transforming our understanding of early Christianity and its mysterious founder. The discovery occurred unexpectedly and quite by accident. In December of 1945, the same year that the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in the desert caves of Qumran in Israel, an Arab peasant named Muhammad ʿAlī al-Samman saddled his camel and rode out with his brothers from their village to a cliff near the town of Naj Hammadi in Upper Egypt to dig for *sebak*, the soft soil that they use to fertilize their crops. As he was digging near the cliff, Muhammad ʿAlī struck something underground. There, to his astonishment, he unearthed a large earthenware jar, about six feet high; lying next to it, he found a corpse. Muhammad ʿAlī says that he hesitated to break the jar, fearing that a *jinn*—a spirit—might live inside. But hope overcame fear; as he considered that it might contain gold or buried treasure, he

raised his mattock, smashed the jar, and discovered, much to his disappointment, that it contained neither. Instead, it held thirteen ancient papyrus volumes, bound in tooled gazelle leather. Muhammad ʿAlī could not read his own language, Arabic, much less the peculiar script of these texts; but he took them home, and dumped them on the ground near the stove. Later his mother admitted that she threw some of the papyrus into the fire for kindling, while she was baking bread.

A few weeks later, Muhammad ʿAlī and his brothers were indicted for murder. For some time they had been on the lookout for the man who had killed their father in a blood feud. When a neighbor spotted their father's killer nearby, the brothers ambushed and attacked him, "hacked off his limbs . . . ripped out his heart, and devoured it among them, as the ultimate act of blood revenge."¹

Fearing that the police investigating the murder would search his house, find

the ancient books, and charge him not only with murder but with illegal possession of antiquities, Muhammad ʿAlī asked a local Coptic priest to keep them for him. He had already tried to sell them to the villagers; and, although no one would even trade him a pack of cigarettes for them, Muhammad ʿAlī still hoped to make some money from the find.

Arrested for murder, Muhammad ʿAlī and his brothers served six months in jail. During that time, a local teacher from his village went to the priest and borrowed one of the books to see whether he could sell it on the black market for antiquities in Cairo.

There a French historian, Jean Dorresse, saw the text and recognized the language as Coptic—the language of Egypt nearly 2,000 years ago. Dorresse realized that one of the texts was a Coptic translation from Greek—the original language of the New Testament. Further, he identified the opening lines with fragments of a Greek *Gospel of Thomas*, discovered in Egypt not long before. An eminent Dutch historian of religion, Professor Gilles Quispel of Leiden, hearing of the discovery, flew to Cairo to examine these mysterious texts. Quispel says he was astonished, as he rushed back to his hotel, to trace out the first line of one of the texts, and read the following: "These are the secret words which the Living Jesus spoke, and which the twin, Judas Thomas, wrote down."² Did Jesus have a twin brother, as this text implies? Could it be an authentic record of Jesus' sayings? According to its title, it contained the *Gospel According to Thomas*. Yet, unlike the gospels of the New Testament, this text identified itself as a *secret* gospel. Quispel went on to discover that this gospel contained many sayings that parallel those in the New Testament; yet others were stri-

kingly different, sayings as strange and compelling as Zen *koans*:

Jesus said, "If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you."³

Bound into the same volume, Quispel found the *Gospel of Philip*, which attributes to Jesus acts and sayings very different from those of the New Testament:

The companion of the (Savior) is Mary Magdalene. (But Christ loved) her more than (all) the disciples, and used to kiss her (often) on her (mouth). The best of the disciples (were offended) . . . they said to him, "Why do you love her more than all of us?" The Savior answered and said to them, "Why do I not love you as (I love) her?"⁴

Muhammad ʿAlī later admitted that some of the texts were lost, burned up or thrown away. But what remains is astonishing: some fifty-two texts from the early centuries of the Christian era, including a collection of Christian gospels previously unknown, except by title, including the *Gospel to the Egyptians*, and the *Gospel of Philip*, as well as many other writings attributed to Jesus' followers, such as the *Secret Book of John*, the *Letter of Peter to Philip*, and the *Apocalypse of Peter*. The texts themselves, written in Coptic, date to the third or fourth century A.D. Yet what Muhammad ʿAlī found are translations of still more ancient manuscripts; some of the originals, written in Greek, may be much earlier. Although scholars sharply debate their dating, Professor Helmut Koester of Harvard University recently has suggested that the *Gospel of Thomas* contains a collection of sayings that

may predate the gospels of the New Testament. If the earliest of the New Testament gospels, the gospel of *Mark*, dates from about 70 A.D., the *Gospel of Thomas* he argues, may date back a generation earlier. This newly discovered gospel, in fact, resembles the kind of source that the authors of *Matthew* and *Luke* used to compose their own gospels.

Why were the texts buried, and why have they remained virtually unknown for nearly 2,000 years? They were buried, apparently, around 370 A.D., after the archbishop of Alexandria sent out an order to Christians all over Egypt banning such books as "heresy" and demanding their destruction. Long before that, such works already had been attacked by another zealously orthodox bishop, Irenaeus of Lyons. Irenaeus wrote a five-volume work, called *The Destruction and Overthrow of Falsely So-called Gnosis*, declaring that "the heretics boast that they have more gospels than there really are . . . but really, they have gospels that are full of blasphemy." Only the four gospels of the New Testament, Irenaeus insists, are authentic. What is his reasoning? Irenaeus declares that just as there are only four principal winds, and four corners of the universe, so there can be only four gospels. Besides, he adds, only the New Testament gospels are written by Jesus' own disciples (*Matthew* and *John*) or their followers (*Mark* and *Luke*). Yet few New Testament scholars today would agree with Irenaeus. Although the gospels of the New Testament—like those discovered at Naj Hammadi—are attributed to Jesus' followers, no one knows who actually wrote any of them; furthermore, what we know about their dating makes the traditional assumptions, in all cases, extremely unlikely.

Irenaeus' statement reminds us,

however, that the collection of books we call the "New Testament" was formed as late as 200 A.D. Before that time, many gospels circulated throughout the Christian communities that were scattered from Asia Minor to Greece, Rome, Gaul, Spain, and Africa. Yet by the late second century, bishops of the church who called themselves "orthodox" rejected all but four of these gospels, denouncing all the rest as, in Irenaeus' words, "an abyss of madness, and blasphemy against Christ."

Those who circulated and revered these writings, however, did not think of themselves as heretics, but as Christians who had received, in addition to Christ's public preaching, other, *secret* teaching which, they say, he reserved only for a select few. The New Testament gospel of *Mark*, indeed, indicates that Jesus taught certain things in public, and others in private, to his disciples alone: "To you is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those outside all things are in parables, so that seeing, they may not perceive, and hearing, they may not understand."⁶ The apostle Paul, too, declares that he hides teachings concerning secret wisdom and mysteries from the majority of his hearers, entrusting them only to those he calls "initiated," or "spiritual" Christians.⁷

The gnostic writings discovered at Naj Hammadi claim to offer such secret teaching. Those who receive it are called *gnostics*, literally, "those who know," from the Greek word *gnosis*, usually translated "knowledge." As gnostic Christians use the term, it might better be translated "insight," since it connotes an intuitive type of knowledge—knowledge which communicates wisdom, or spiritual enlightenment. One gnostic teacher says that the gnostic is one who has come to understand:

Who we were, and what we have become; where we were . . . whither we are going; from what we are being released; what birth is, and what is rebirth.⁸

Another gnostic teacher says:

Abandon the search for God and the creator and other things like that. Look for Him by taking yourselves as the starting point. Learn who it is *within you* who makes everything his own, and says, 'My God, my soul, my body.' Learn the sources of sorrow, joy, love, hate. . . . If you carefully investigate these things, you will find Him *in yourself*.⁹

I first encountered these texts as a graduate student at Harvard, where I had gone to study the history of Christianity. Astonished to learn of the discovery, I wanted to know, how do these newly discovered texts compare with the gospels of the New Testament? At the moment, I can mention only a few of the most obvious points of comparison.

At a time when other Christians insisted that Jesus rose bodily from the grave, gnostic Christians tended to ridicule that view as naive, or, in their words, the "faith of fools." The *Treatise on Resurrection*, discovered at Naj Hammadi, offers instead a symbolic interpretation of resurrection. Like a Buddhist teacher, its author describes ordinary human existence as a state of spiritual "death." But resurrection symbolizes the moment of enlightenment: "It is . . . the revelation of what truly exists, and a transition into newness." Whoever grasps this, the author suggests, becomes spiritually alive. This means, he declares, that you can become "raised from the dead" right now. "Are you—the real you—mere corruption. . . ? Why do you not examine

your own self, and see that you have arisen?"¹⁰

Secondly, at a time when many Christians, following the gospels of *Matthew* and *Luke*, insisted that Jesus' birth was utterly miraculous—that he was "born from a virgin," without Joseph's participation—some gnostic Christians suggested instead a different interpretation. The *Gospel of Philip* suggests that "virgin birth" is a symbolic interpretation of Jesus' spiritual birth through what the text calls the "holy virginal spirit."

Or let us take a third example. While orthodox Christians spoke of God in the exclusively masculine terms borrowed from Judaism—as Father, Lord, Master, King, and Judge—some gnostic Christians chose to describe God in both masculine and feminine terms, as Father and Mother. The *Secret Book of John*, discovered at Naj Hammadi, tells how John, grieving over Christ's death, receives a vision of the Lord, in which he says, "John, John, why do you weep? . . . I am the one who is with you always . . . I am the Father; I am the Mother; and I am the Son."¹¹ The *Gospel of Thomas*, similarly, relates that Jesus left his human parents, Mary and Joseph, for his "true Father in heaven," and his "true Mother," the holy spirit.

Of all the remarkable differences between the New Testament gospels and those discovered at Naj Hammadi, however, I find most striking the alternate views the latter offer of Jesus himself—and of his message.

According to the gospels of the New Testament (let us take, for example, the one that most scholars agree is the earliest, the gospel of *Mark*), Jesus first appears proclaiming the "good news of the kingdom of God." What is that "good news"? According to *Mark*, Jesus announced that "the time is at hand; the

kingdom of God is drawing near." As *Mark* sees it, Jesus declared that the end of time is at hand; the world is about to undergo cataclysmic transformation. Jesus predicted war, strife, conflict, and suffering, followed by a world-shattering event—the coming of the kingdom of God. According to *Mark*, Jesus expected that event to happen during the life of his own disciples: "There are some of you standing here who shall not taste death until you see the kingdom of God come with power."¹²

The gnostic *Gospel of Thomas*, on the contrary, says something very different. Here the "kingdom of God" is not an event expected to happen in history, nor is it a "place." In fact, the author of *Thomas* seems to ridicule such views as naive:

Jesus said, "If those who lead you say to you, 'See, the kingdom is in the sky,' then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,' then the fish will precede you."¹³

According to the *Gospel of Thomas*, the kingdom represents a state of self-discovery: "Rather, the kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you. When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living Father." But the disciples, mistaking that "kingdom" for a future event, persist in naive questioning:

"When will . . . the new world come?" Jesus said to them, "What you look forward to has already come, but you do not recognize it."¹⁴

According to saying 113, the disciples said to him, "When will the kingdom come?" Jesus said:

It will not come by waiting for it. It will not be a matter of saying, 'Here it

is,' or 'There it is.' Rather, the kingdom of the Father is spread out upon the earth, and men do not see it.¹⁵

According to the *Gospel of Thomas*, then, the "kingdom of God" symbolizes a state of transformed consciousness:

Jesus saw infants being suckled. He said to his disciples, 'These infants being suckled are like those who enter the kingdom.' They said to him, 'Will we, then, as children, enter the kingdom?' Jesus said to them, 'When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside, the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same . . . then you shall enter the Kingdom.'¹⁶

One enters that "kingdom" when one comes to know oneself. For the secret of *gnosis* is that when one comes to know oneself, at the deepest level, simultaneously one comes to know God as the source of one's being.

If we ask, then, "who is Jesus?" the *Gospel of Thomas* gives a wholly different answer from the gospels of the New Testament. *Mark*, for example, depicts Jesus as an utterly unique being—the Messiah, God's appointed king. As *Mark* tells it, Peter discovered the secret of Jesus' identity:

And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Casarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, 'Who do men say that I am?' And they told him 'John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets. And he asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Messiah.'¹⁷

Matthew adds that Jesus blessed Peter for the accuracy of this recognition, de-

claring that God alone revealed it to him. But the *Gospel of Thomas* tells the same story differently:

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Compare Me to someone, and tell Me whom I am like.' Simon Peter said to him, 'You are like a righteous messenger.' Matthew said to him, 'You are like a wise philosopher.' Thomas said to him, 'Master, my mouth is wholly incapable of saying whom You are like.'

The author of *Thomas* here interprets, for Greek-speaking readers, Matthew's portrait of Jesus as rabbinic teacher ("wise philosopher"), and Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah ("righteous messenger"). Here Jesus does not deny these roles, at least in relation to Matthew and Peter. But here they—and their answers—represent an inferior level of understanding. Thomas, who recognizes that he cannot assign any specific role to Jesus, transcends, at that moment, the relation of disciple to master. At this moment of recognition, Jesus declares that Thomas has become like Himself:

I am not your Master, for you have drunk, and become drunk from the bubbling stream I measured out. . . . Whoever drinks from my mouth will become as I am, and I myself will become that person, and things that are hidden will be revealed to him.¹⁸

The New Testament gospel of *John* emphasizes Jesus' uniqueness even more strongly than does *Mark*. According to *John*, Jesus is not a human being at all; rather, he is the divine and eternal Word of God, God's "only begotten son," who descends to earth in human form, to rescue the human race from eternal damnation:

God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him should not perish, but have eternal life: . . . Whoever believes on him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe on him is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.¹⁹

If you recall the saying we noted before from the *Gospel of Thomas*, you will see that *Thomas* offers a very different message. Far from regarding himself as the "only begotten" son of God, Jesus here says to his disciples, "when you come to know yourselves" (and discover the divine within you) then "you will recognize that it is *you* who are the sons of the living Father"—just like Jesus! The gnostic *Gospel of Truth*, similarly, declares that "you are the sons of interior knowledge. . . . Say, then, from the heart that you are the perfect day, and in you dwells the light that does not fail." The *Gospel of Philip* makes the same point more succinctly: you are to "become not a Christian, but a Christ." This, I suggest, is the symbolic meaning of attributing the *Gospel of Thomas* to Jesus' "twin brother." The statement is meant to say, in effect, that "you, the reader, are the twin brother of Christ; when you recognize the divine within you, then you come to see, as Thomas does, that you and Jesus are, so to speak, identical twins." So, according to the *Book of Thomas the Contender*, also discovered at Naj Hammadi, Jesus says to Thomas (that is, to the reader):

Since it has been said that you are my twin and true companion, examine yourself, so that you may understand who you are. . . . Since you are called my brother, it is not fitting that you be ignorant of

yourself. . . . I (says Jesus) am the knowledge of the truth. So while you accompany me, although you do not yet understand it, you have already come to know, and you will be called 'the one who knows himself.' For whoever has not known himself has known nothing, but he who has known himself has simultaneously already achieved knowledge about the depth of all things.²⁰

One who seeks to "become not a Christian, but a Christ" no longer looks to Jesus, as orthodox believers do, as the source of all truth. So, while the Jesus of *John* declares, "I am the door; whoever enters through me shall be saved," the gnostic teacher, Silvanus, points in a different direction:

Knock upon yourself as upon a door, and walk upon yourself as on a straight road. For if you walk upon that road, it is impossible for you to go astray. . . . Open the door for yourself, that you may know what is. . . . Whatever you open for yourself, you will open.²¹

Or, to take one more example: according to *John*, when Thomas says to Jesus, "We do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus replies, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, except through me." Yet according to the gnostic *Dialogue of Savior*, when the disciples ask Jesus the same question ("What is the place to which we shall go?") he directs each disciple toward his or her own way: "The place which you can reach, stand there!" The *Gospel of Thomas* says that when the disciples ask Jesus how they can reach the place where he stands, his ironic answer turns them back upon their own resources: they are not to attempt merely to follow

his way, or imitate him; instead, they are to go to themselves, and find their own way.

Since I first encountered these gnostic texts, I found myself fascinated. I kept asking myself, what is so terrible, so blasphemous, so "heretical" about these gospels and the portrait of Jesus they offer? Why is it that, by 200 A.D., the bishops had banished virtually every trace of these remarkable writings, and condemned them as the most despicable heresy? Why did such able Christian leaders as Irenaeus and Tertullian devote their energies to attacking and destroying such sources, rather than accepting them as offering compelling alternate views of Jesus?

Orthodox writers themselves (and historians, following their lead) have told us that they objected to gnostic views for religious and philosophic reasons. Certainly they did; even in this brief sketch we have seen some of the ways in which gnostic sources differ. But as I spent years working to edit and continue research on these sources, I found the traditional answers inadequate. Why, I wondered, did church leaders insist that these religious differences threatened the very survival of the church itself? I began to reflect that the struggle with gnosticism occurred at the very time when earlier, diversified forms of Christianity were giving way to a single, unified institutional structure. The second century witnessed the development of church leadership into a formal hierarchy of bishops, priests, and deacons; simultaneously, Christian teaching was formulated into a creed, and came to be protected by a specific canon—the New Testament. Church hierarchy, creed, and canon all contribute to develop for the first time, uniform doctrine, practice, and discipline among the various churches scattered throughout the

known world. Realizing this, I began to suspect that the reasons for suppressing gnosticism were—to a considerable extent—political; that is, they involved the politics of the institutionalization of Christianity.

What happened, in simplest terms, is this: those elements of early Jesus tradition that contributed to this process of institutionalization came to be called "orthodox." Conversely, elements of tradition that either did not support the institutional church (or actually opposed it) came to be called "heresy." I suggest, for example, that if you were the leader of a second century Christian community, concerned to consolidate the church and validate it as the sole hope for human salvation, there are certain things you might prefer that Jesus not have said—for example, the saying with which we began, from the *Gospel of Thomas* ("Jesus said, 'If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you.'"). Such a saying makes no suggestion that one needs a church, a priest, baptism, or a creed; one hardly needs Jesus, except to point the way toward one's own solitary, interior search for truth.

But sayings from the gospels that came to be called "orthodox" bear the opposite implication. Recall the one that we noted from the Gospel of *John*: ("Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, except through me.'"). Whoever drives through the United States is likely to see this saying on highway billboards, billboards signed by any one of the local churches. Their purpose is clear: by indicating that one finds God only through Jesus, the saying implies that one finds Jesus only through the church. Yet, I suggest, you will never see on a billboard the gnostic counterpart of this saying. (The disciples asked Jesus, "What is the

place to which we should go?" Jesus said, "The place which you can reach, stand there"). Who would pay for it? Publishing such a saying would not serve the interests of any church. Only those views of Jesus which stress his uniqueness as Messiah, Lord, Savior, "only begotten Son of God" came to be accepted as "orthodox," I suggest, since only this interpretation of Jesus served to validate the claims of the catholic church of the second century—and ever since—that "outside the church there is no salvation."

The portrait of Jesus offered in gnostic sources, as we have seen, suggests the opposite. The "living Jesus" of the *Gospel of Thomas* points one not toward the church, but toward oneself—toward a solitary, radically individualistic process of spiritual exploration. Such sayings not only tend to undermine the church's claims, but may render them irrelevant, or even false. One gnostic text, indeed, attributes to Jesus sharp criticism of the claims of church leaders:

"Others . . . outside our number . . . call themselves bishops and also deacons, as if they had received their authority from God. . . . These people are waterless canals."

One final note, to avoid misunderstanding: I do not mean to say that church leaders acted in a deliberately Machiavellian way to suppress gnostic Christianity, simply to consolidate their own power and importance. Some Marxist historians might say that, and so attempt to reduce all religious issues to political ones. What I suggest follows the direction not of Marx but of the sociologist Max Weber, who has shown how religious and political issues interact, in various forms of reciprocal relationship, in the history of religious movements. Further, Weber shows that while reli-

gious movements generally begin with a charismatic figure (like Jesus of Nazareth), the only ones that survive historically are those that develop, within the first several generations of the founder's death, effective means of institutionalization.

Had the Christian movement not developed such institutional structures, it probably would have disappeared

among hundreds of other Greco-Roman cults. I believe that we owe the survival of Christian tradition to the organizational and theological structure that the orthodox church developed. But the discovery at Naj Hammadi allows us to see, for the first time, what was lost in the process—some remarkable alternate views of Jesus and his message.

Footnotes

¹J.M. Robinson, Introduction, in *The Naj Hammadi Library* (New York, 1977), 22.

²*Gospel of Thomas* 32, 10-11

³*Ibid.*, 45.29-33

⁴*Gospel of Philip* 63.32-64.5

⁵Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 3.11.9

⁶*Mark* 4.11-12

⁷*Corinthians* 2.6-13

⁸Theodotus, cited in Clemens Alexandrinus *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 78.2

⁹Hippolytus, *ref.* 8.15.1-2; emphasis added.

¹⁰*Treatise on Resurrection* 48.31-49.25

¹¹*Apocryphon of John* 2.13-14

¹²*Mark* 9.1

¹³*Gospel of Thomas* 32.19-33.5.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 42.7-10

¹⁵*Loc. cit.*, 51.13-18

¹⁶*Loc. cit.*, 37.20-35

¹⁷*Mark* 8.27-29

¹⁸*Gospel of Thomas* 34.30-35.7

¹⁹*John* 3.16-18

²⁰*The Book of Thomas the Contender* 138.7-18

²¹*The Teachings of Silvanus* 106.30-35.

THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Religious Studies at Arizona State University offers a curriculum of more than forty courses and programs of study leading to the B.A. and M.A. degrees. The faculty and curriculum cover a well-balanced diversity of teaching and research areas. R. Glen Bomstad Jr. (Ph.D., Yale) teaches Greco-Roman religions. Anne Feldhaus (Ph.D., Pennsylvania) covers the religious traditions of India. Delwin Brown (Chair, Ph.D., Claremont) teaches modern and contemporary religious thought. James H. Foard (Ph.D., Stanford) covers Asian religious traditions with special interest in Japan. Joel Gereboff (Ph.D., Brown) specializes in Judaism, and religion and ethics. Sam D. Gill (Ph.D., Chicago) focuses on non-literate and Native American religious traditions. Richard C. Martin (Ph.D., New York University) teaches Islamic and Near Eastern traditions. Rosemary Rader (Ph.D., Stanford) is an historian of Christianity with special interest in the early centuries. Richard E. Wentz (Ph.D., George Washington University) teaches religion in America and American folk religion.

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